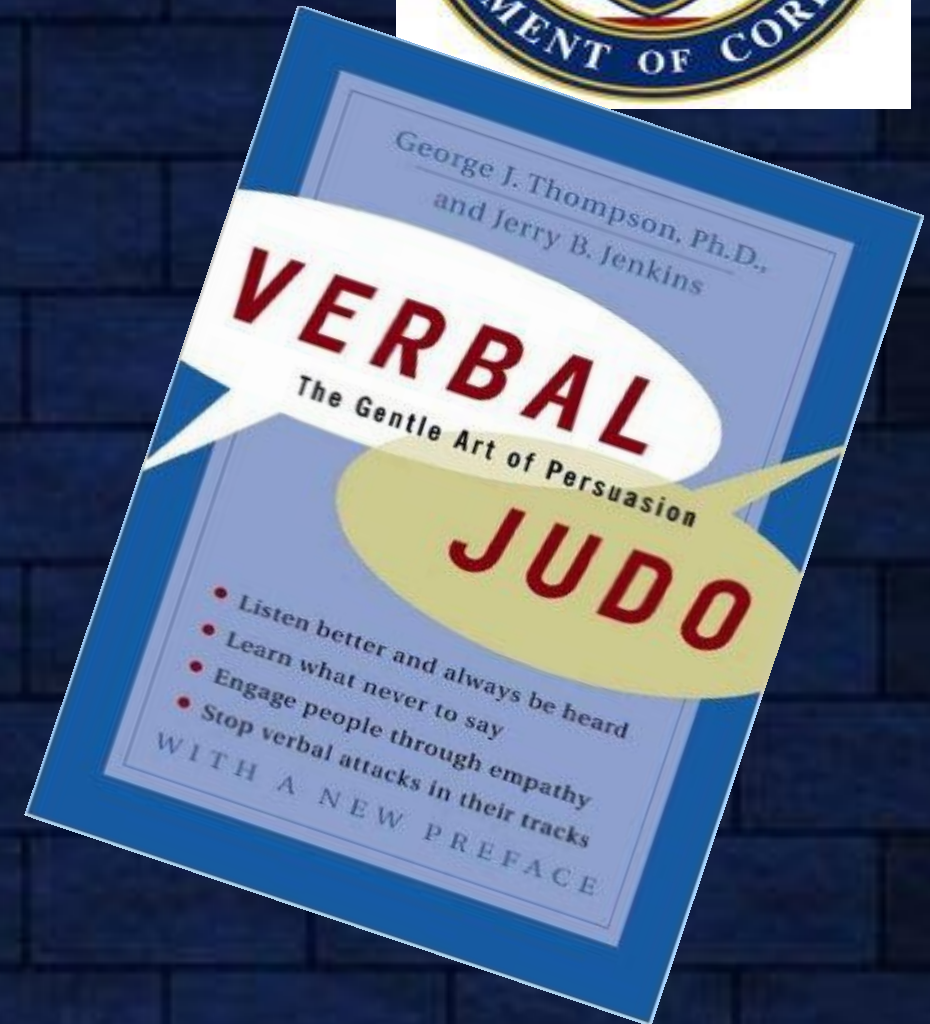


Enhancing Communication Skills



Acknowledgments

- Indiana Department of Correction's lesson plans on "Calming the Storm" (5/1/2015) and "Communication: Verbal De-escalation" (2/1/2009).
- "Verbal Judo: The Gentle Art of Persuasion" by George J. Thompson and Jerry B. Jenkins (HarperCollins Publishers 3/2/2004).



Objectives

1. Recognize triggers/hot buttons
2. Recognize high risk responses/what not to say
3. Identify stages of conflict escalation and appropriate responses
4. Identify techniques to verbally de-escalate a situation

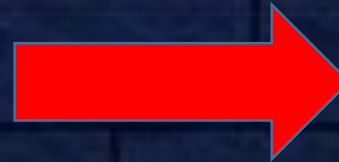
ME
ATTITUTDE



YOU
BEHAVIOR



ME
BEHAVIOR



YOU
ATTITUDE



Verbal Vs. Non-Verbal Communication



7-10%

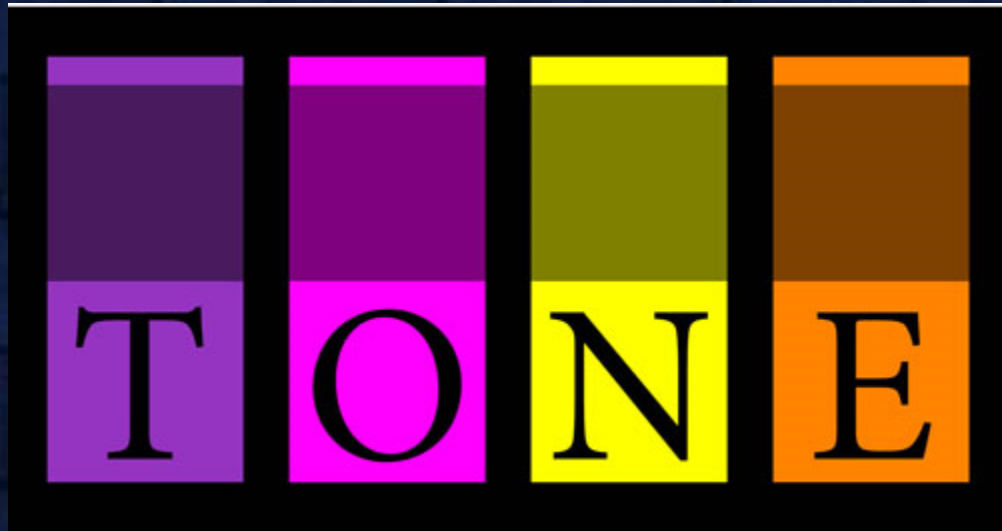


33-40%

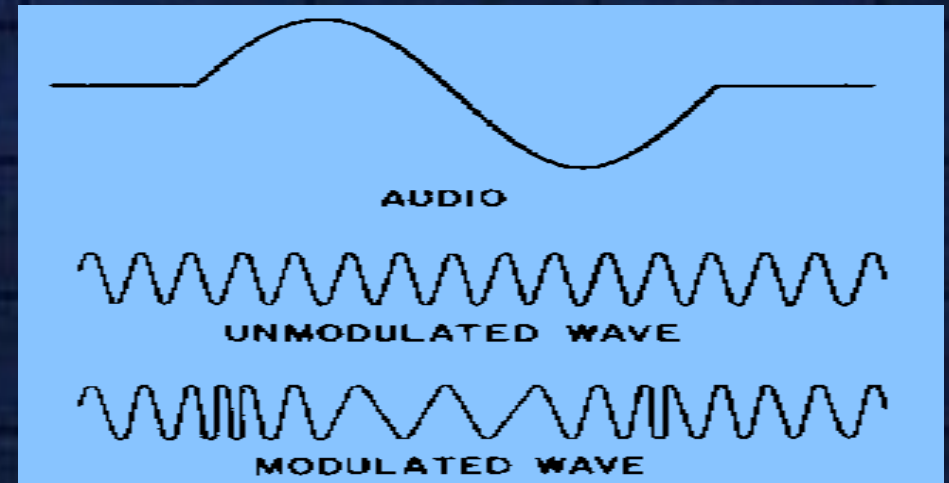


50-60%

4 Voice Elements



PACE





"Watch your tone."

It's not what you say but.....

"What would you like me to do about it?"

- Helpful
- Sarcastic
- Agitated

PACE



Fast = Attention

Slow = Calm

- “I need everyone to please take a step back.”
- “Don’t worry, we’ll get everything worked out for you.”

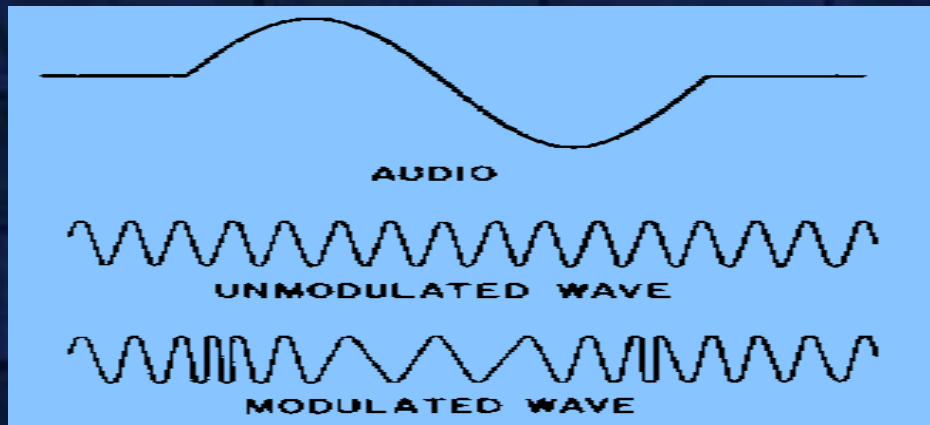


Loud= Control or Incite

Low= Calm or lack of confidence

- “Please, have a seat.”





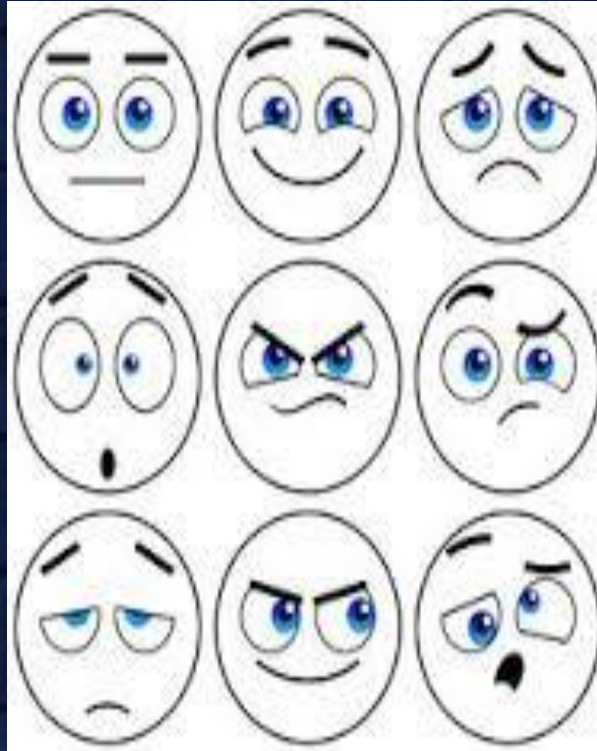
- “I never said he stole the money.”
- “I never said he stole the money.”
- “I never said he stole the money.”
- “I never said he stole the money.”
- “I never said he stole the money.”



Non-Verbal



Eye contact

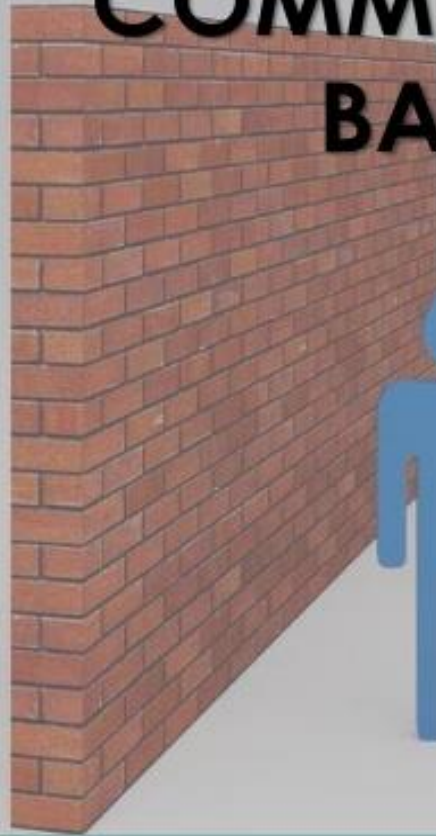


Facial expressions



Gestures

COMMUNICATION BARRIERS



Activity: What are your Triggers?



Advising

Criticizing

Diverting

Diagnosing

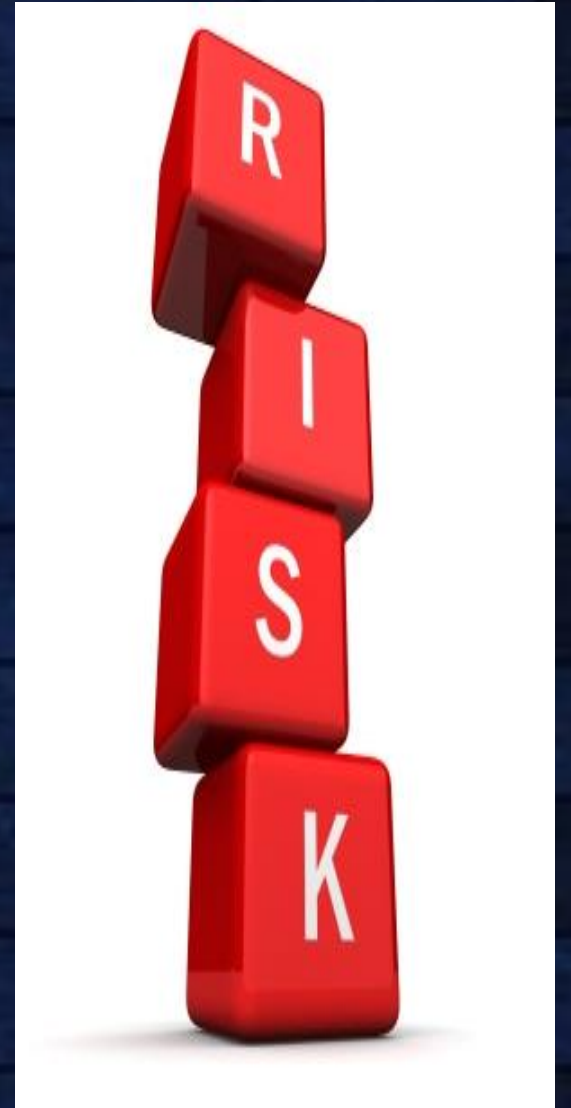
Threatening

Excessive Questioning

Logical Argument

Moralizing

Name Calling



11 Things Not to Say.....



Come Here!

Say this instead:
Excuse me. May I
please talk to you
over here for just a
moment?



You wouldn't understand.



Say this instead: I hope I can explain this clearly...or... I'm not comfortable sharing that information.

Because those are the rules.

Do this instead: Put the rules/policies into context and explain how they contribute to everyone's well being.

RULES!

1. You SHALL!
2. You WILL!
3. You MUST!

It's none of your business.

Do this instead: If you're not able to or comfortable sharing something with them, politely explain that to them.



What do you want me to do about it?

**I'm fluent in
sarcasm.....**



Do this instead: Explain that you're sorry you don't have the answer they're looking for. When possible, direct them to someone who can assist them.

Calm down.

Say this instead: It's going to be alright. Please explain to me what's going on because I want to help.



What's your problem?



Say this instead:
What's the
matter?....or.....How
can I help?

You never....or....You always....

Say this instead: Doing this job, I receive a lot of different information from a lot of people. Please give me more information so I can best determine how to proceed.

I'm not going to say this again.

Say this instead: It's important that you understand this, so let me say it again. Please listen carefully.



I'm doing this for your own good.



Try this instead: If you really are doing this for the benefit of another person, give them the reasons and examples of how it's a benefit to them.

Why don't you be reasonable.

Try this instead: Use re-assuring language and then paraphrase, "We can work through this. Let me see if I understand your position...."

This helps ensure you're hearing them correctly and allows them to see the position from your point of view.

ESCALATE



Activity: Conflict Escalators

Escalator= Something that could cause conflict.

- **Environment** (office set-up, procedures, happenings, etc.)
- **Individual** (characteristics, events, experiences, etc.)
- **Staff** (say, do, attitude, etc.)

DON'T...

- point or shake your finger
- smile
- argue or try to convince
- get defensive or answer abusive questions
- get loud or try to yell over a screaming person
- get in a power struggle or threaten
- fake attention
- make false promises
- maintain constant eye contact
- roll your eyes



A close-up photograph of a brick wall with reddish-brown bricks and light-colored mortar. The text 'DE-ESCALATE' is superimposed in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font, slanted upwards from left to right. The text is positioned across the middle of the image, with the 'D' starting near the left edge and the 'E' ending near the right edge.

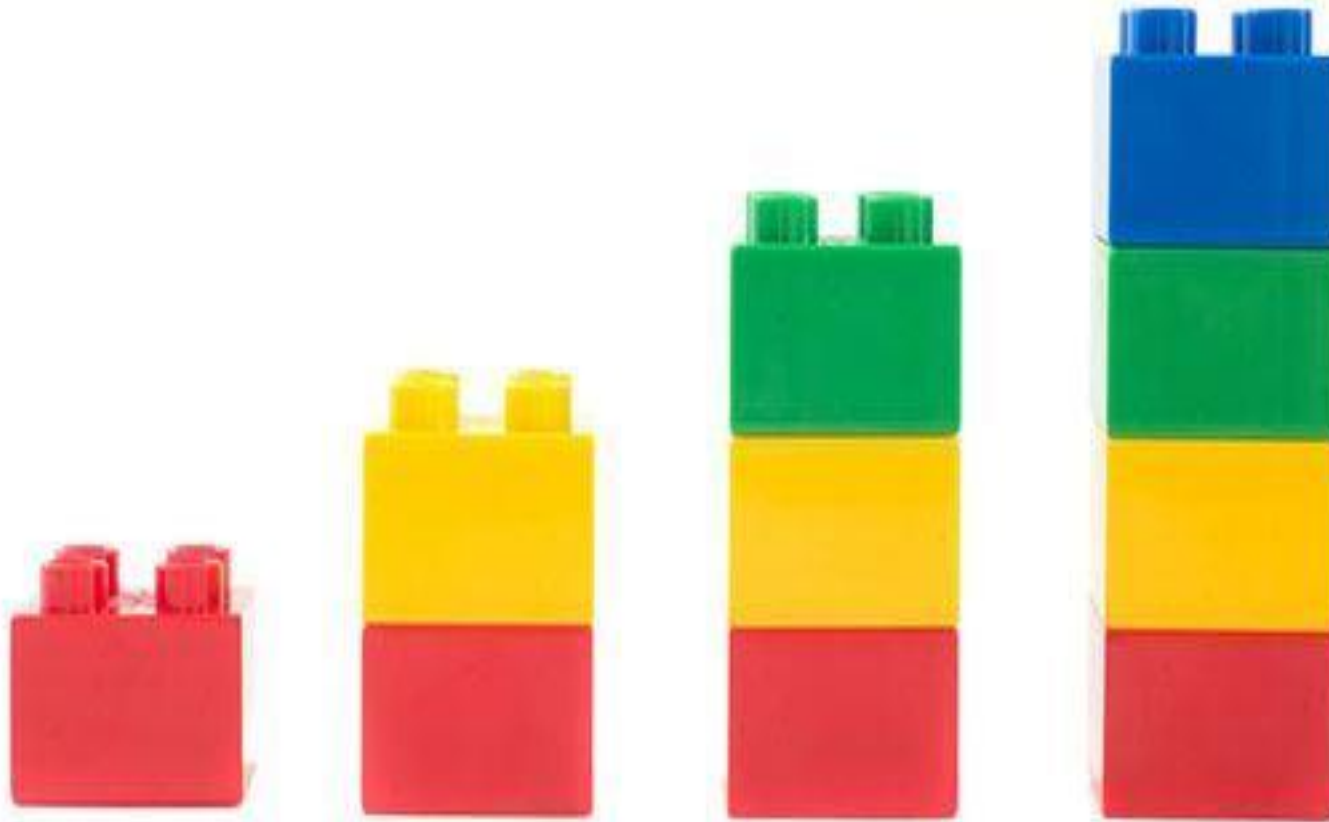
DE-ESCALATE

Conflict De-escalators

What are some things that help de-escalate conflict situations?

What are some characteristics of people who are good at de-escalating, or avoiding, conflict situations?

Stages of Conflict



Stage 1: Potential



Signs

- Mild agitation
- Decreased focus
- Increase in sarcasm
- Restricted body language (no eye contact, crossing arms, etc.)

Responses

- Speak with them to see what they are experiencing
- Allow the person to talk it out
- Manage your emotions/body language

Stage 2: Verbal Expression

Signs

- Caustic remarks/insults
- Arguing
- Blaming
- Excuses



Responses

- Manage emotions/body language
- Avoid arguing/verbally attacking/criticizing
- Validate the experience (I understand that, I believe that, I hear that...)

Stage 3: Direct Verbal Expression



Signs

- Verbal threats
- Anger is focused on person
- One stage away from physically acting out

Responses

- Manage tone of voice and body posture
- Calm, soothing tone of voice
- Non-confrontational, supportive body language
- Don't not allow emotions to take over (triggers)

Stage 4: Non-Directed Assault/Aggression

Signs

- Punching/hitting objects
- Throwing items with no intent to hit/harm others
- Slamming fists, stomping feet, slamming doors
- Tipping things over
- Rage behavior (loud screaming or yelling)

Responses

- Approach in a calm manner.
- Show you are in control of your own feelings
- Maintain appropriate physical space
- Speak in a calm, soft tone
- Reflect expressed feelings back verbally
- Remove audience from scene

Stage 5: Directed Assault/Aggression

Signs

- Hitting, punching, kicking, biting, or spitting at another
- Throwing something at another with clear intention of hitting them.

Responses

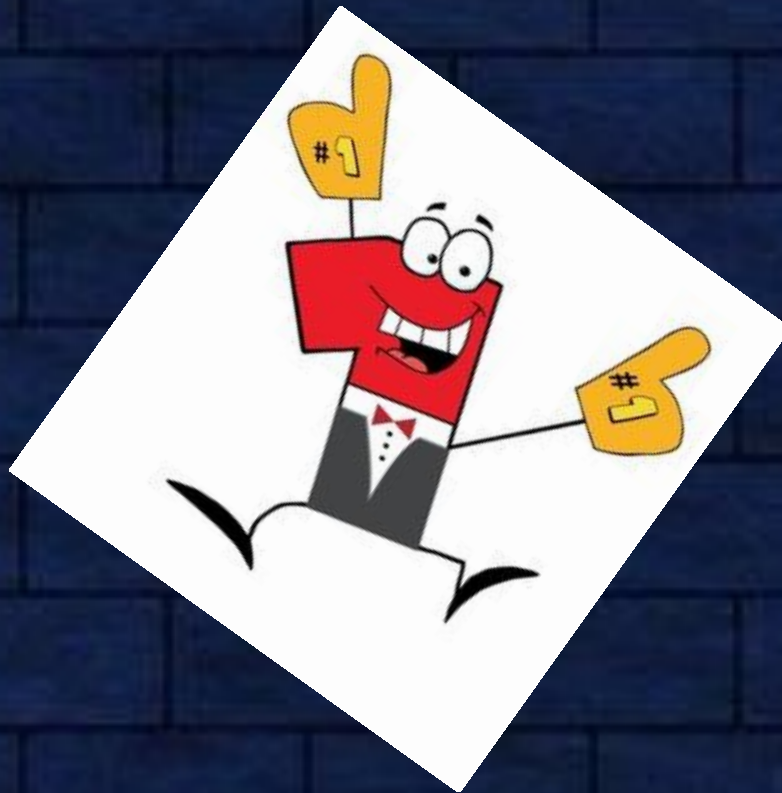
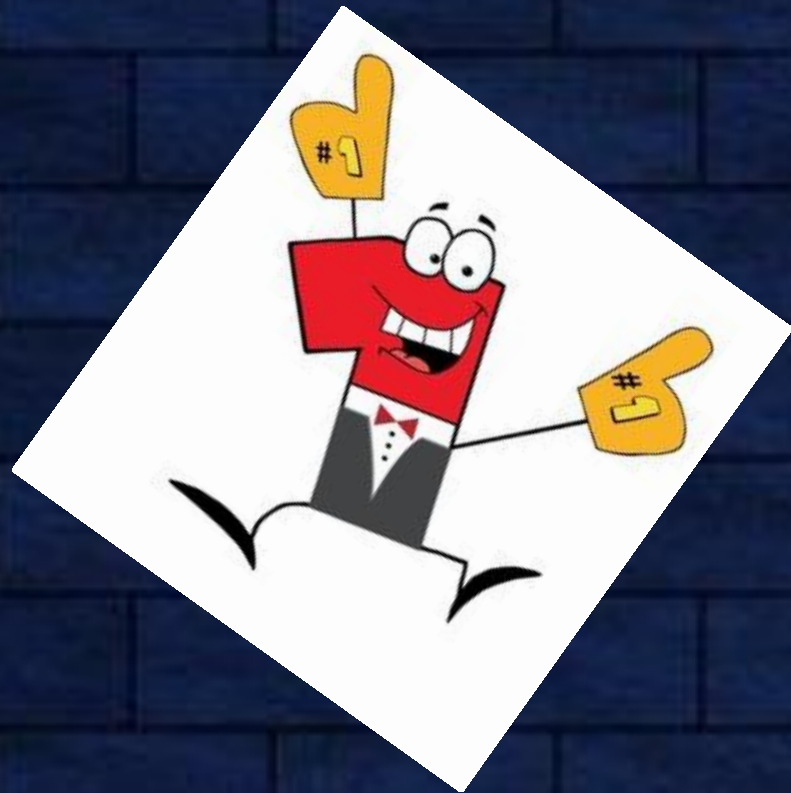
- Direct verbal commands
- Assistance from others
- Personal protection techniques
- Use of force continuum
- Remain professional

Stage 6: Calming

- Some people only reach stage three and stop.
- This stage should always happen
- Same day or later point in time
- Person has calmed down enough communicate again
- Re-establish contact/communication with the person



Reasoning with a hostile person is not possible. The #1 objective in verbal de-escalation is to reduce the level of agitation so that discussion becomes possible.



2 Principles

1. Let the person say what he/she wants...as long as they are compliant.
2. Always go for the win-win solution.

Essentials for De-escalation

- Remain calm.
- Allow person to verbalize the issue.
- Listen actively and empathetically.
- Show empathy for person's feelings but not hostile behavior.
- Set limits firmly and explain the consequences.
- Provide choices where possible in which both alternatives are safe.

- Remember de-escalation skills and use them accordingly.
- Keep your facial expression neutral.
- Answer informational questions no matter how asked
 - *Why do I have to fill out these #@%*^#% forms?...real information seeking question.*
- Ignore abusive comments and questions
 - *Why are all court employees ^\$\$\$#@!&\$?*
- Obtain the name of the person and use it.
- Get the person to say “Yes.”

- Ignore name calling or insults. It's not about you.
- Be honest. Lying will only upset the person more. When possible, wait to deliver more upsetting information.
- Be aware of personal space.
- Keep hands out of pockets.
- Be respectful when calling for help or setting limits.

Summary

De-escalation is not a one-size fits all. Every situation is different and will require different techniques.

Verbal de-escalation is not our natural tendency. It requires practice but will become more comfortable the more you do it.

Make a conscious effort to implement techniques you don't already use, and eliminate the poisonous phrases from your vocabulary.

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